



Kol Hanearim with  
Rabbi Fried  
-See back cover-



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Inside:

Praying for Israel

Rachel, Leah and Esav

Spiritual Schizophrenia



**RABBI YY JACOBSON**  
will be in town for Shabbos



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BAIS MEDRASH OHR CHAIM

**Rabbi Aaron Lankry**  
*Marah D'asra*  
305-332-3311  
alankry@gmail.com

**Rabbi Daniel Coren**  
*דומ"צ - מגיד שיעור*  
914-645-4199  
rabbidac@gmail.com

**Rabbi Nachum Scheiner**  
*Executive Director*  
*Rosh Kollel, Kollel Boker & Night Kollel*  
845-587-3462  
rabbisheiner@18forshay.com

**Sholom Ber Sternberg**  
*Director of Operations*  
office@18forshay.com

**Shmulie Fruchter**  
*Facilities Manager*  
manager@18forshay.com

**Bais Medrash Ohr Chaim**  
18 Forshay Rd. Monsey NY 10952  
info@18forshay.com | 845-587-3462  
Shul Website: www.18forshay.com



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**Shabbos Zmanim**

2023 **Early Friday Mincha**, 18 Main  
at מנחה גדולה and then every 15 minutes until 3:00pm

CANDLE LIGHTING	4:13 <sup>PM</sup>
MINCHA in tent Aleph	4:23 <sup>PM</sup>
CHABAD MINCHA	4:23 <sup>PM</sup>
SHKIYA	4:31 <sup>PM</sup>

**SHABBOS SHACHRIS MINYANIM:**

Vasikin followed by a Daf Yomi Shiur, 20↑	6:16 <sup>AM</sup>
Shachris 2 18 Main	8:00 <sup>AM</sup>
Shachris 3 Tent א	9:15 <sup>AM</sup>
Shachris 4 BAIS CHABAD 20↑	10:00 <sup>AM</sup>
Shachris 5 18 Main	10:30 <sup>AM</sup>
First Mincha on Shabbos	1:45 <sup>PM</sup>
PIRCHEI	2:00 <sup>PM</sup>
MINCHA FOLLOWED BY SHALOSH SEUDOS	4:10 <sup>PM</sup>
SHKIYA	4:30 <sup>PM</sup>
MAARIV 1	5:10 <sup>PM</sup>
MAARIV 2	5:15 <sup>PM</sup>

**Late Maariv Motzei Shabbos Every 15 Minutes!**  
6:00 pm – 8:30 pm | 18 Main

**Weekday Zmanim**

Zmanim for the week of Nov 26 - Dec 2

**Shacharis — 20 min. before Neitz**

**Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag**  
and more (see posted times)

**NEITZ**

S 6:57 | M 6:58 | T 6:59 | W 7:00  
T 7:01 | F 7:02 | SH 7:03

**TEFILA- GRA**

S 10:07 | M 10:08 | T 10:08 | W 10:09  
T 10:10 | F 10:10 | SH 10:11

**SHEMA- Magen Avraham**

S 8:36 | M 8:37 | T 8:38 | W 8:38  
T 8:38 | F 8:39 | SH 8:40

**CHATZOS**

S 11:43 | M 11:43 | T 11:43 | W 11:44  
T 11:44 | F 11:45 | SH 11:45

**SHEMA- GRA**

S 9:19 | M 9:20 | T 9:21 | W 9:22  
T 9:22 | F 9:23 | SH 9:24

**PLAG**

S 3:30 | M 3:30 | T 3:29 | W 3:29  
T 3:29 | F 3:29 | SH 3:29

**SHKIA**

S 4:30 | M 4:29 | T 4:29 | W 4:28  
T 4:28 | F 4:28 | SH 4:28

For Shiurim:



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For 20 Min Daf  
Yomi

Rabbi Coren

For a 4 min  
video of Chizuk  
connecting to the  
day



Rabbi Coren



# A Flawed King

During the rule of Shlomo Hamelech, the nation reached the highest level of wisdom and wealth. Indeed, the streets of Jerusalem were made out of gold. He unified the world by taking a wife from every country. But once a person reaches perfection, the only place to go is down.

Following the death of Shlomo Hamelech, the kingdom was divided between his son Rechavam, and Yiravam ben Nivat from the tribe of Ephrayim. Yiravam was a man of extraordinary potential who had it within his power to join with Rechavam, unite the two kingdoms, and bring Mashiach. Instead, he enacted legislation that earned him the title *chotay u'machati* – one who sins and causes others to sin. This is why the Talmud placed him among those individuals who have lost their portion in *olam habah* – the World to Come. His greatest sin was erecting two golden calves, one in the north of Israel and one in the south, where the people were encouraged to serve the idols rather than go to the Bais Hamikdash. The prophet cried out against this terrible defection from Hashem, and prophesized the destruction and exile of the 10 Tribes that followed Yiravam and the tribe of Ephrayim.

Dovid Hamelech previously designated the Milo area outside Yerushalayim as a communal plaza for the masses of Jewish people who visited Yerushalayim during the festivals. Shlomo Hamelech, however, opted to use this area as living quarters for his new bride, the daughter of Pharaoh. The Jewish people were infuriated by this outrageous act, but lacked the courage to respond to it. Yeravam took the initiative and displayed his religious zeal and publicly denounced the king for his behavior. Hashem rewarded Yeravam for his courageous act in defense of Hashem's honor, and elevated him to the highest position of authority.

However, *Chazal* add that Yeravam was also severely punished because he publicly shamed the king (*Sanhedrin* 101b). Maharsha explains that the sages sought to understand Yeravam's devastating end. They question that since Yeravam performed such a meritorious act, as is evidenced by his appointment over Israel, how could such zeal result in the horrible sins and subsequent exile? If Hashem truly appreciated Yeravam's devotion, how could it develop so quickly into a rampant campaign of idolatry?

The Maharsha explains that although Yeravam's intentions were proper, they were accompanied by arrogance. True, Shlomo Hamelech deserved to be reprimanded, but this did not include public shame and embarrassment. The Sages reveal that had Yeravam been truly sensitive to the king's honor and authority, he would have never have acted in this manner. Although he acted out of religious zeal, he was self-absorbed in piety and ignored the king's honor and due respect. This imperfection ultimately led Yeravam to total corruption, and caused him to forfeit his portion in the world to come.

In our world, one of the greatest challenges in *chinuch* is that the educator does not live up to the very same standards that he imposes upon his students. "Do as I say, and not as I do" is the silent message many students are receiving. How often is there hurt and alienation in a family all in the name of Hashem? Hashem does not want aggression and fighting, certainly not in His name. Even if a person wants to defend Hashem's honor, Hashem does not want them to shame someone as a byproduct of this defense.

I don't know how we will meet the challenges that we'll face when *Mashiach* comes, but if we can remove our own personal arrogance, then we will be one step ahead.



# Praying for Israel

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

The *Parsha* begins with Yakov Avinu traveling from Beer Sheva to Charan. On his way he passes through the *Makom Hamikdash* and finds out that he is at the gates of heaven. Rashi explains that in heaven there is also a Bais Hamikdash that parallels the one below. Chazal tell us that Yakov Avinu instituted the prayer of *Maariv*. And that is the reason why the *Passuk* describes the timing of Yakov Avinu sleeping – it was when the sun set.

The Bobover Rebbe *z"l*, in his beautiful *Sefer* on Chumash expands the words of Chazal. He explains that Yakov represents the Jew in the darkness of Galus trying to survive and stay connected.

I would like to suggest an idea which is based on the Baal Shem and I also saw the idea written by the brother of the Maharal of Prague. The idea connects us also to Rav Chaim Shmulevitz's incredible *shmuzen* that he gave during the Yom Kippur war. Reb Chaim is discussing the nature of a person when it comes to Prayer especially when in a situation of pain. He gives an interesting example. Chazal tell us that Rachel Imeinu was buried on the path where the Jewish people during the destruction of the first *Bais Hamikdash* were going to use as they left Israel to go into exile. The obvious question is why can't she also be buried in Chevron with all the other Avos and Imahos and pray on their behalf from there?

The answer, says Reb Chaim, is that the closer one is to see the actual pain of another, the more intense the prayer will be. I was thinking that many of us are far in distance from the actual war in Israel. However, based on the Baal Shem who says that you are when your heart is, and based on the profound insight of the brother of the Maharal of Prague that one can even be considered living in Israel if he really desires to. Then everyone of us as we pray can do the same.

I have suggested to many to take a 15-minute slot during the day that will be their time for saying *Tehilim* and standing on guard to protect the Jewish people especially in Israel in the battlefield and really for the Jewish people all over the world. And when doing so, envision yourself standing with the soldiers and the battlefield. Perhaps we can suggest that this idea is also included in the vision that Yakov our father was shown as he was traveling into the dark *galus*, that no matter where a person prays from if he connects his heart to Israel (which is actually brought down in the *Poskim* in *Hilchos Tefillah*) and the *makom Hamikdash* the prayers will ascend directly to the upper *Bais Hamikdash* and we will be accepted by Hashem to usher in the final *Geulah*.

Wednesday Night 8pm – Smichas chaver Rabbi Coren Office  
Shabbos Morning - Vasikin Minyan & 8:00am Minyan

# The Last Words



Rabbi YY Jacobson

Let us recall the episode of Jacob's hasty departure from Laban. Prior to fleeing with Jacob, Rachel had stolen her father's "terafim" (idols). Upon learning of their disappearance, Laban chased Jacob and accused him of stealing his gods. Jacob reacts angrily, and responds:

*But anyone with whom you find your gods shall not remain alive! In the presence of our kinsmen, point out what I have of yours and take it." Jacob, of course, did not know that Rachel had stolen them.*

Rashi quotes the Midrash that this curse caused Rachel to die in childbirth. This is why the Torah emphasizes that "Jacob was unaware that Rachel had stolen the idols," suggesting that he would not have uttered such a curse had he known that Rachel stole them.

Now, sometime later, in our *parshah*, Rachel is about to breathe her last. She and Jacob loved each other deeply, and it is time to bid farewell. Not a word is spoken between them.

This is strange. The death of Rachel is contained in five verses, containing fifty-eight words. The narrative is conveyed almost without any direct speech (other than the reassurance of the midwife, in verse 17). A great silence envelopes this episode. The text refrains from describing Jacob's emotional response to the death of his beloved wife either indirectly (through a description of his actions) or directly (by quoting his words or prayers directly).

They do say one thing: they argue about a name. What was **this** about?

## Husband and Wife Think of Each Other

Imagine what Jacob was feeling when he realized that he cursed his wife to die not knowing that she was the one who stole the gods of her father? How would any husband feel? Never mind Jacob who loved Rachel with every fiber of his being, and watched his last son being born as his mother was perishing?

How did Jacob feel about himself at that moment? How did

Rachel feel?

Husband and wife must have endured a tremendous rush of emotions as they looked into each other's eyes knowing that Jacob's curse was coming true. Imagine the tremendous guilt that Jacob must have felt, knowing that he condemned the most beloved of his wives to premature death due to a single curse. How tragic!

Rachel peered into his eyes, and, knowing what her husband is going through, names the baby Ben Oni, which can be translated as "the son of my deception." Rachel was saying: It was my fault. I was the one who acted inappropriately. I deceived my father—not you.

To which Jacob responded: Bin Yamin, which can be translated "the son of an oath." (*Yamin* means an oath since traditionally we lift the right hand (*yad yamin*) during an oath). Jacob was saying: "The critical condition caused by the birth of this son is the result of my oath to Laban that the one who stole his idols shall not live. It was my oath that led to this tragedy."

As they said goodbye to each other, Rachel was ensuring that Jacob does not live for the remainder of his life with guilt; Jacob was ensuring that Rachel does not blame herself for her death. It was his fault, not hers.

There is no outburst of emotion displayed in this story. Because even deeper than Jacob emoting as a result of his own pain, the Torah described his last words to his wife, trying to make **her** feel at ease. And the last words of Rachel, trying to make Jacob feel better.

At those moments, each of them was thinking of the other.

Womens Shiur **Tuesday** 9:30am (18 Main)  
Chassidus Shiur **Monday & Thursday** 7:45am (18 Main)  
**Shabbos:** Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs)  
Morning 9:00 (20 Upstairs)  
After Davening 12:00pm (20 Upstairs)

UFARATZTA



## The Torah Illuminates the Path of Life

...The Torah is called Torah Or - "The Torah is Light", because the essential nature of the Torah is to illuminate man's path in life. And when the path is illuminated in this way, one can see clearly which actions and conduct are good, and which have to be avoided.

Of course, the Torah is vast and cannot be easily mastered by all. For this reason, there is a summary of the Torah in the *Shulchan Aruch* which is a concise code of daily Jewish conduct. But even the *Shulchan Aruch* is not easily accessible to everyone, and that is why there are Rabbis to be consulted, since it is their purpose and function to teach and guide the individual Jew on how to live his daily life in accordance with the Torah.

All this gives everyone the opportunity to develop a proper and meaningful way of life, and above all, to have complete trust in Hashem whose benevolent providence extends to each and

everyone individually. Above all, it is necessary to cultivate sincere and wholehearted confidence [*bitochoh*] in G-d, as it is written, "You shall be wholehearted with Hashem your G-d," [Devarim 18,13] and this will eliminate all sorts of worries, anxieties and confusions. It develops a sense of security in that there is a Lord and Master Who takes care not only of the world as a whole, but also of each individual, with loving care. Even if, as you write, as a person sometimes fails to live up to expectations, there is always the knowledge that nothing stands in the way of *teshuvah*.

It is surely unnecessary to elaborate to you on the above, but only to emphasize that we are all commanded to serve G-d with joy...

= The Rebbe's letter to someone who felt confused. Chayenu - Chayei Sarah p. 169.

Tes Kislev: *Yom Holedes* and *Yom Hilula* of the Miteler Rebbe, eldest son of the Baal Hatanya.

Yud Kislev: The Miteler Rebbe was released from prison.

# Defining the Mitzva of Milah PART II

by Rabbi Nachum Scheiner



We previously discussed that there is a fundamental machlokes if the skin must be detached from the skin to fulfill the mitzvah of milah. According to the Chachmas Adam and the Chamudei Daniel it is not a valid milah, if it was not detached. According to the Divrei Chaim and the others it is valid, as long as it is no longer covering the crown, even if it was not detached.

## Explanation of the word המול

The basis for this machlokes really goes back to the understanding the expression used in the pasuk (17:10): “הַמּוֹל לְכֹל זָכָר” – You shall circumcise every male.” The word milah is loosely translated as circumcision, but what does it really mean? Does the word “milah” mean to cut or to remove? Based on these two ways of explaining the word, there will be a different way of understanding the essence of the mitzvah.

According to the Chachmas Adam, the word המול means to cut. Hence, simply removing it from the crown is not considered fulfillment of the mitzvah, and the child will still be an areil. This is clear in the Targum, who writes on the pasuk of the mitzvah of milah: “וְתִגְדְּרוּ יָת בְּשָׂרָא דְעַרְלָתְכוֹן.”

The Divrei Chaim, on the other hand, explains that the word המול means to remove the foreskin, and as long as it is pushed down and the crown is visible, the mitzvah has been fulfilled. He quotes the Chasam Sofer (Y”D 249), who explains that the word המול means to remove. The Chasam Sofer proves this from the words of the Targum on the pasuk (Nitzavim 30:6): “וּמָל ה' אֶת לְבַבְךָ.” The Targum explains: “וְיִעֲדֵי ה' יָת טַפְשֵׁי לִבְךָ” which means that Hashem will remove the silliness of your heart.

But this brings us to a big problem: As mentioned previously, the Divrei Chaim agrees that the proper way to fulfill the mitzvah is to cut off the entire foreskin the mitzvah, which must be done through some amount of cutting. If according to the Divrei Chaim, the pasuk just means that the foreskin must be removed, what is the source that it is supposed to be cut off?

One answer is based on the opinion of the Maharil Diskin, who maintains that there are really two parts to the mitzvah – cutting off the orlah, and removing the orlah. Therefore, one must be sure to also cut some of the orlah, but for the remainder it is enough to remove it from the crown.

## Removing without cutting – a practical application

I recently had a situation at a bris, which brings out this question, if removing without cutting is a fulfillment of the mitzvah. If a baby is born partially mahul, which means it is partially open on top, the mohel will often do something called “manual separating.” In order to ensure that the orlah is detached, the mohel pushes down the orlah, until it appears as if the baby is already mahul. Then, they push it back up and at the actual bris, they cut it off.

The Shevet Halevi (9:208) was asked if, in this case, since the mitzvah seemingly fulfilled earlier – when the mohel separates the arloh – perhaps the brocha should be recited at that time. He rules – based on the above – that the brocha should not be recited, since without any cutting done there is no fulfillment of the mitzvah.

There is also a fascinating question in the poskim in regards to the use of a laser – which is essentially burning off the orlah, instead of the standard method of cutting it off with a knife. The question of using this procedure is relevant for a bris being performed on

grownups – such as for baalei teshuva or geirim.

This question will depend on the halachic status of laser cutting. If it is a halachically valid method of cutting then it would be good even according to the Chachmas Adam. But, if it is not considered cutting, then even the Divrei Chaim would agree that it is not valid, since he also agrees that some cutting is required

**Rabbi Nachum Scheiner**

**מוהל מומחה**

CELL: **845-499-6354**



## Summary

There is a machlokes if the mitzvah of milah is to cut the foreskin, or just to remove it from the “crown.” We should definitely follow the stringent opinion and cut off the entire orlah. However, there is room to be lenient and consider it a valid milah.

*There is also a Kuntres of shiurim on the topic of milah available. If you would like a copy of any of these shiurim, or for any comments and questions, please send a request to: [RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com](mailto:RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com), or call 845 372 6618.*

## Rabbi Scheiner

KOLLEL BOKER | 7:00-8:00am

- Chavrusa learning - Gemara  
Currently: מסכת חגיגה
- Friday - Shiurim Beinyonei Dyoma and relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL | 8:15-9:45pm

- Chavrusa learning - Halacha  
Currently: הלכות שבת / הדלקת נרות

SHIURIM BY ROSH KOLLEL & FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS

- Daf Yomi | 8:45-9:45pm
- Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00pm
- ZERA SHIMSHON SHIUR | 8:15-9:00pm Thursday Nights

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at 9:30am in 18 Main

Followed by Shachris at 10:00.

*Please note the time change  
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**Kol Hanearim youth program**  
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**Motzaei Shabbos | 6:45pm**



בי"ד

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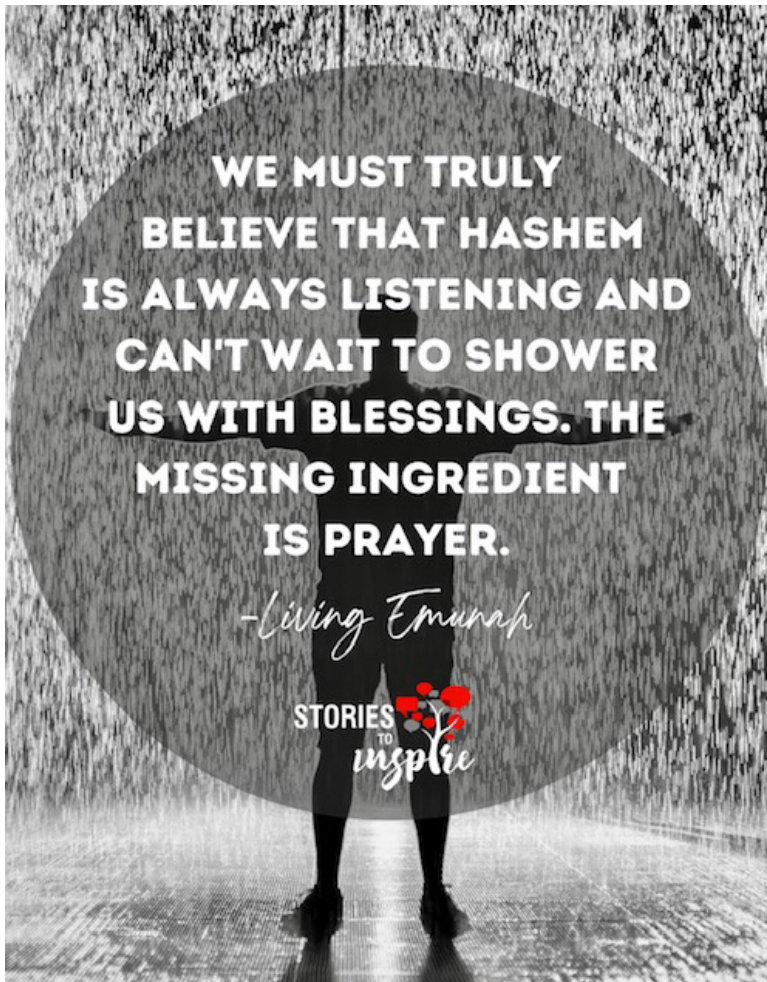
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**WE MUST TRULY  
 BELIEVE THAT HASHEM  
 IS ALWAYS LISTENING AND  
 CAN'T WAIT TO SHOWER  
 US WITH BLESSINGS. THE  
 MISSING INGREDIENT  
 IS PRAYER.**

*-Living Emunah*



## Yaakov Avinu Focused on the Greatness of Shabbos Kodesh

“ויאמר מה אתן לך, ויאמר יעקב לא תתן לי מאומה אם תעשה לי הדבר הזה אשובה ארעה צאנך אשמר” –30:31

“And he (Lavan) said: What shall I give you? And Yaakov said: Do not give me anything: If you do this thing for me, I will resume pasturing and guarding your flocks.”

Yaakov Avinu did not want anything to come from Lavan, rather all would come directly from Hashem. That is why he made a deal with Lavan and based on certain parameters the animals would be his – and all of those animals were not that Lavan wanted to give – but rather they were all directly from Hashem.

This is as the Alshich explained on the Posuk, “נתן לי לחם, – לאכול” – that Yaakov only wanted to receive all his goodness directly from Hashem, and not from the שר הארץ – the ministering angel who was in charge of the land. Had Lavan given him anything, that would have been like receiving it from the שר הארץ but Yaakov only wanted directly from Hashem. Between a giver and a receiver, there is something which connects them – that which the giver gives, and the receiver receives. The Maharal in *Tiferes Yisroel* says that Hashem held the *Lucho*s in His hands, and Moshe did as well – and that connected them – that is how Moshe Rabbeinu was truly connected to Hashem. Yaakov did not want to be connected to Lavan in any way, shape, or form. This is what the Posuk means when it says, “עם לבן גרתי” –

that Yaakov always saw himself like a גר, a stranger, in regard to Lavan. He never wanted to be part of his family, rather, he sought to always remain at a distance, so that Lavan could not have a negative influence upon him.

With this understanding, we can explain why Klal Yisroel took all the gold and silver from Mitzrayim by “borrowing” it, and not asking for it outright. Had they received all of the gold and silver as a gift, that would have created a bond between the giver and the receiver, the Mitzriyim and Klal Yisroel, and Klal Yisroel did not want to have that attachment to them. Thus, they were to borrow it, not have any connection to it. Klal Yisroel were *Zoche* to it when the Mitzriyim chased after them into the Yam, and thus they were able to keep the gold and silver as spoils of war, but there was no connection to the Mitzriyim, as they did not give it to them.

The *Hashpa’ah* of Shabbos Kodesh does not come through the שר הארץ rather it comes directly from Hashem. Shabbos is a נחלה of Yaakov, and it is thus like all the *Hashpa’ah* comes through Yaakov. This is why the Arizal says that the food of *Shabbos Kodesh* does not connect a person more to *Gashmiyus*, for Hashem gives great *Hashpa’ah* on this holy day. This is why ר' משה מפשייארסק says that the leftovers of Shabbos Kodesh are like leftovers of מנחות, that it is like the food is coming from the שולחן גבוה, the table of Above; that is where the food comes from. One needs to connect Shabbos to the weekdays, so that all the six days of the week should be elevated to the level of Shabbos Kodesh – when all comes directly from Hashem.

## Unlocking our Destiny

“And Yaakov Avinu left Beer Sheva to go towards Charan”

The words of Rashi ring in our ears. “When a *tzaddik* leaves a town, its shine, beauty and wonder cease and diminish” ...if only momentarily.

We are all designed for greatness, but how many of us fulfill our destiny. Somewhere along the way, we lose the fascination we had as a child. Maybe it’s our own inner voice, maybe it’s the voice of others- but we learn, unfortunately, to give up on our dreams at some point. Settling for the safe and sure, we set up goals below our capabilities.

Each one of us has in our spiritual DNA, the strength to save a city. Even after they are niftar, *Tzaddikim* can still save a city; as they did on October 7 in Netivot, the home of the Baba Sali. It was told that when the terrorists came to the gates of the city, there were three *tzaddikim* guarding its gates; from this fear, the terrorists moved on to the next town.

We must learn to be concerned for others as well as ourselves, to think globally as well as domestically. We are a nation of leaders, and our talents; creative and otherwise must never be wasted. If we allow the “*tzaddik*” in our soul to diminish, if we allow our dreams of creativity (emulating our Creator), to fall by the wayside, then we will have forsaken the very power that G-d has vested in us to change the world. One who saves even one soul (his own) is as if he has saved an entire world. The road to self-actualization may have some bumps but it is the only journey with complete satisfaction.

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH



We are going through difficult times as a nation, but as a people we are becoming more and more aware of the greatness in our souls and are rising to the challenge daily. That’s why the word for challenge is *nisayon* (lit. *something that is raised*). Oftentimes it is not an ordinary challenge, but one that to our eyes seems insurmountable, but to the Master of the World, who knows all that is destined to happen to us til the end of time -- it is custom made. We climb the steps to greatness by rising to our challenges with a positive attitude, as little anger as possible and the understanding that the challenge itself is what we need to achieve greatness and eternity in our lives.

The *Nefesh Hachaim* says that if we wish to realign ourselves with our destiny, we must internalize the words “*Ein od milvado*” – there is absolutely no one but You, Hashem, who determines our future! Once we make peace with the fact that what we have is all that was meant for us, disappointment and jealousy will fall away and we will have cleared a path for our *tefillos* to achieve miracles.

In this month of Kislev (lit. the covering of the heart), if we open our hearts to Hashem, inviting Him into our lives, then He will open His heart, as it were, to us and hear our prayers.

May this month bring miraculous *yeshuos* for all of Klal Yisroel!



# Why Yaakov?

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

**Why Yaacov?** That is the question we find ourselves asking repeatedly as we read through the stories in the book of Bereishit. Unlike Noach, Yaacov is not described as righteous, perfect in his generations, one who walked with God. Unlike Avraham, he did not leave his land, his birthplace, and his father's house in response to a Divine call. Unlike Yitzchak, he did not offer himself up as a sacrifice. And he didn't appear to have the burning sense of justice and willingness to intervene that we see in Moshe in his youth. Yet we are defined for all time as the descendants of Yaacov, *Bnei Yisrael*. Hence the force of the question: **Why Yaacov?**

The answer, it seems to me, is found in the beginning of this week's parsha. Yaacov was in the middle of a journey from one danger to another. He had left home because Eisav had vowed to kill him when Yitzchak (their father) died. He was about to enter the household of his Uncle Lavan, which would itself present other dangers. Far from home, alone, he was at a point of maximum vulnerability. The sun set. Night fell. Yaacov lay down to sleep, and then saw the majestic vision of the angels climbing the ladder.

Nothing has prepared Yaacov for this encounter, a point emphasised in his own words when he says, "the Lord is in this place – and I did not know it!" The very verb used at the beginning of the passage, "He came upon a place," in Hebrew *vayifga bamakom*, also means an unexpected encounter. Later, in rabbinic Hebrew, the word *haMakom*, "the Place," came to mean "God." So in a poetic way the phrase *vayifga bamakom* could be read as, "**Yaacov had an unexpected encounter with God.**"

Add to this Yaacov's late-night wrestling match with the angel in the next week's parsha and we have an answer to our question. Yaacov is the man who has his deepest spiritual experiences alone, at night, in the face of danger and far from home. He is the man who meets God when he least expects to, when his mind is on other things, when he is in a state of fear, and possibly on the brink of despair.

Avraham gave Jews the courage to challenge the idols of the age. Yitzchak gave them the capacity for self-sacrifice. Moshe taught them to be passionate fighters for justice. But Yaacov gave them the knowledge that **precisely when you feel most alone, God is still with you, giving you the courage to hope and the strength to dream.**

Sometimes our deepest spiritual experiences come when we least expect them, when we are closest to despair. We are at our point of maximum vulnerability – and it is when we are most fully open to God that God is most fully open to us. The most profound of all spiritual experiences, the core of all others, is the knowledge that **we are not alone. God is holding us by the hand, sheltering us, lifting us when we fall, forgiving us when we fail, healing the wounds in our soul through the power of His love.**



# A House

Rabbi Shimshon David Pincus, zt"l

What is a "house of G-d?" First let's grasp what a house is, on the simplest level. *Chazal* say: 'Not like Avraham, for whom it is written, "mountain," as it says, As "on this day, on the mountain, *Hashem* will be seen" (*Bereishis* 22:14). And not like Yitzchak, for whom it is written, "field," as it says, "And Yitzchak went out to pray in the field" (*ibid* 24:63). Rather, like Yaacov, who called it "house," as it says (*ibid* 28:19) "And he called the name of that place, 'The house of G-d.'" (*Pesachim* 88a)

This *Gemara* expresses the different approaches taken by the *Avos*. What is the right way to achieve a personal connection and relationship with *Hashem*? Avraham chose the way of the "mountain," Yitzchak, the way of the "field," and Yaacov, the way of the "house." And *Hashem* cherished the way of the "house" above all.

Obviously, it is impossible to build a relationship with *Hashem* in the street or the park, as the relationship requires privacy. If a person spends his time in the street, this surely will not help him grow to be an outstanding *talmid chacham* and *yerei Shamayim*. But Avraham Avinu maintained that climbing to the top of a high mountain and thus separating himself from the impurity of his surroundings granted him sufficient privacy with *Hashem*.

*Yitzchak Avinu* disagreed: A mountain is not enough. True, there are not very many people on top of a mountain; nevertheless, it is an area open to all who wish to enter. What we need is a field because a field is private property. That is why "Yitzchak went out to pray in the field." He felt that to be alone with *Hashem* and build a relationship with Him, the additional privacy of a field is needed.

*Yaakov Avinu* countered that even the privacy afforded by a field is insufficient to build a proper relationship with *Hashem*. What we need is total privacy – that of a house. A house is one hundred percent private. No one comes in without knocking, even when the door is unlocked. This is because everyone knows that a house is a private place, and no one may enter unless granted permission by the master of the house.

*Hashem* agreed with *Yaakov Avinu*: "Rather, like Yaacov, who called it 'house.'" Here, Yaacov taught us something very important. To build a relationship with *Hashem*, it is not enough to just have *deveikus*. The *deveikus* needs complete privacy. Not like Avraham's mountain, and not like Yitzchak's field, but like Yaacov's house.

In the *Beis Hamikdash*, we lived in closeness to *Hashem*, in *kedushah* and *taharah*. Nowadays, when there is no *Beis Hamikdash* anymore, being a *talmid chacham* has the same nature. A *talmid chacham* is someone who lives in closeness to his Creator in a relationship of absolute privacy, without allowing entrance to foreign influences.



# Slow and Steady

Rabbi Yaakov Horowitz

The Torah relates (Bereishis 31:1-2) how Yaakov developed a growing sense of unease as Lavan and his family members began resenting Yaakov's increasing material success. First he overheard the sons of Lavan complaining that Yaakov had accumulated all of his wealth by taking the resources of their father. Then Yaakov carefully watched the facial expressions of Lavan when in his presence – which only confirmed his fears that Lavan was acting unusually hostile to him. In the following pasuk (31:3), Hashem informed Yaakov that it was time for him to leave the house of Lavan and return home to Eretz Cnaaan.

The Ohr Hachayim points out that the Torah relates these facts in three successive *pesukim* to explain the sudden exit of Yaakov – who did not give Lavan notification of his departure. Were Yaakov commanded by Hashem to leave without having seen the signs of hostility, he would have informed Lavan that he was about to leave. If he would only have noticed these signs and not been notified by Hashem that it was time to go, he would have reflected as to the array of his options. Both together, comments the Ohr Hachayim, suggested that it was time for him to leave immediately.

## Bringing His Wives Along ... Slowly

I would like to suggest an additional

explanation to the entire sequence of events, one whose logical underpinnings are supported by the thought-provoking discussions that took place between Yaakov and his wives immediately following these *pesukim*.

Yaakov responded to the crisis of the distressing news regarding his eroding relationship with Lavan by calling his wives out to the fields where he worked. Once there, Yaakov informed them in great detail (Bereishis 31:5-10) of their father's duplicity and how Lavan had continuously attempted to deprive Yaakov of his wages with a variety of nefarious measures. Only after these pragmatic reasons for leaving were discussed did Yaakov mention (31:11) that Hashem had commanded him to return home.

This seems quite puzzling. Why didn't Yaakov simply announce that he would be following Hashem's direct order to return home? Apparently, Yaakov was looking to lower the level of difficulty for his wives to follow Hashem's command by shedding light on Lavan's hostile actions. But this raises an additional question: How did Yaakov come to the conclusion that this was the right course of action? What led him to take the longer, more patient route to his objective of getting the support of his wives for the word of Hashem?

## A Personal Example ... and a Lesson for Life

I would like to suggest that Yaakov reflected upon how Hashem had acted with him and then charted a similar course for his interactions with his wives. Perhaps Yaakov noticed that Hashem did not speak to him about leaving the house of Lavan until Yaakov became painfully aware of Lavan's darker side – giving Yaakov a pragmatic reason for leaving, as well as the need to follow the word of Hashem. Once Yaakov understood Hashem's lesson that the longer path is often the shorter and more effective one, he used a similar strategy when speaking to his wives.

As we grow older and wiser, we tend to look to expand our sphere of influence. In our excitement, we are often tempted to rush others (and sometimes even ourselves) along inappropriately before they are ready for the next step. But that approach is almost certainly doomed to failure. Skipping many steps while climbing a ladder (which interestingly was the theme of Yaakov's dream in this week's parsha) often results in a crash that erases all progress that was already made.

Following the slow, sustained path to growth, as prescribed by the Rambam (*Hilchos Teshuva* 10:1 and 10:5), results in the realization of our goals – for ourselves and for those whom we wish to influence.

# Brothers and Children

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

## And Yaakov said to his brothers, 'Gather stones!...' (31:46)

After spending twenty years in Charan, Yaakov flees with his family to Eretz Yisroel. Lavan pursues Yaakov with the intention of killing him. However, Hashem intervenes and warns Lavan not to harm Yaakov. When he confronts Yaakov, Lavan proposes a treaty. Among the terms of the treaty a landmark is designated on the border between Canaan and Aram which both parties agree not to cross with hostile intentions. The verse records "Yaakov said to his brothers 'Gather stones!' So they gathered stones for a mound upon which they ate a meal." The commentaries disagree as to who the "brothers" of Yaakov are and what eating upon this mound signifies. The Ramban understands that the brothers are Lavan's companions and the meal is part of the covenant, signaling mutual acceptance of the pact. However, Rashi maintains that the brothers

are, in fact, Yaakov's children, and that they are referred to as "brothers" because they stand by Yaakov in battle and times of distress. The meal, therefore, signifies Yaakov staking his claim to the area past the Aramean border.

The bond between children and parents is even closer than that between siblings. How does the Torah's referring to Yaakov's children as his "brothers" reflect their commitment to their father in battle? What insight into the parent-child relationship is the Torah offering?

Commensurate to the responsibility a parent expects his child to assume, is the independence which the parent must be willing to allow his child to acquire. Parents must allow their children the freedom to stand on their own. Not given this freedom, a child will perceive himself as completely subordinate in his position vis-à-vis his parents, for they have always

been his caretakers and providers. Consequently, he will never be in the proper state of mind to assume the mantle of responsibility required by his parents.



Rashi is explaining that Yaakov does not call his children "brothers" because they go to battle with him, rather, to assure that they would be able to go to battle with him. A child has a greater commitment to his parent than to his sibling. However, this does not ensure that he will be more effective in performing the task required. A child who views his parents as his protectors, will be ineffective in their defense. By Yaakov giving his children a sense of equality, he brings forth from within them a new level of responsibility which would be required in dire straits.



# Rochel, Leah, and Esav

Rabbi Yitzchak Adlerstein

**Rochel was jealous of her sister. She said to Yaakov, "Give me children!"**

When we first meet Leah, we are told that her "eyes were tender." The gemara offers us the back-story. The talk of the "street" was the *shidduchim*-to-be between the sons of Yitzchok and the daughters of Lavan. Everyone knew what would happen: the older daughter would go to the older son. Naturally, Leah had some interest in this story, and began inquiring about her apparent intended. She quickly learned that his reputation preceded him – but not in a good way. The more she learned about Esav, the more Leah was repulsed by him – and took to crying incessantly. When Hashem saw how much Leah hated Esav's lifestyle and misadventures, He had pity upon her, and gave her the gift of the ability to bear children.

Rochel, on the other hand, led a charmed life. She was aware of the blessing of her attractiveness. More importantly, she knew she was destined to marry Yaakov the *tzaddik*. Her demeanor was one of happiness and thankfulness – and hence her dilemma. She understood that her sister had achieved great merit in fully reacting against Esav's deeds with disgust. Because Leah thought she was going to be drawn into his life, she was able to personalize the rejection of his evil. While Rochel certainly rejected Esav's evil, she knew that she could not feel it as intensely as her sister. Lacking that merit, she turned to her husband to *daven* for her, hoping that his merit could compensate for what she could not supply. We know that Yaakov spurned her request – and used some sharp, acerbic language to boot.

Rochel was not only rejected, but Yaakov's apparent coldness got her thinking. Perhaps, if I can't provide children to Yaakov, he won't really need me. He will consider divorcing me. If he does, what will happen if Esav then sets his eyes on me? (Rashi, in fact, on *pasuk* 22 writes that even though there was no divorce contemplated, Esav did set his eyes upon Rochel, and desired to make her his!)

The upshot of this nightmare was that Rochel began to react to Esav exactly the way her sister had! In her new position of vulnerability, she was able to look upon Esav with heightened contempt. When that happened, Hashem rewarded her with a pregnancy.

Our *meforshim* are troubled that Yitzchok could father an Esav after his experience at the *Akeidah*. There, he had become a pure, elevated *olah*. How did Esav become part of his family?

Some of them pin the nature of Esav on Rivka, Yitzchok's wife. There was an ample font of evil in her familial roots; she had not purged herself entirely of its burden. Some of the unresolved evil in her background took shape in the person of Esav. (These commentators find support for this theory in the verse that predicted the clashing personalities of the two children she would bear. "There are two nations in your womb." Here, the Torah means to localize the source of Esav and his evil; because he was a product of Rivka's womb – and not of the purity of Yitzchok alone – Esav was well-connected to the evil that was a legacy of Rivka's forebears).

Divine Providence had a different plan for Yaakov. His progeny had to be united in their commitment to their father's principles and message. Somehow, the residual evil in the family had to be dealt with. First Leah, and then Rochel, were placed in situations where they would develop a fierce contempt for Esav and all that he stood for. Only in this way could they become suitable mothers of the *shivtei Kah*; only this way would they merit having children.

# Yud Tes Kislev

For young readers (and older ones too!)

From Chabad.org

The Baal Shem Tov was the founder of *Chassidus*. He taught people to serve *HaShem* with a sincere heart like the shepherd boy did. His students spread *Chassidus* to many Jews, teaching them that a Jew should serve *HaShem* with his heart.

The Baal Shem Tov's leading student was the Maggid of Mezeritch. One of the many people who came to study with him was the Alter Rebbe. The Alter Rebbe spread *Chassidus* throughout Russia. When the Russian government saw that many people were following his teachings, they arrested him. On *Yud-Tes Kislev* he was released, and this date became the *Rosh HaShanah* of *Chassidus*. From this day onward, the Alter Rebbe began spreading *Chassidus* even more than before.

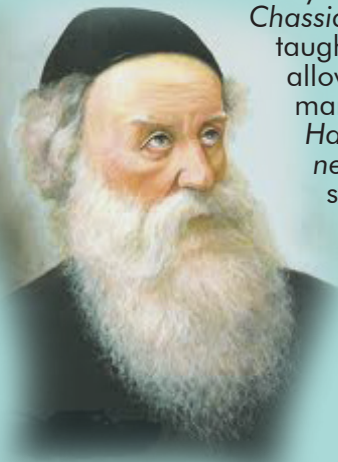
The Alter Rebbe called himself the grandson of the Baal Shem Tov. "I am his student's student," the Alter Rebbe said, "so I am like his spiritual grandchild. I am continuing his teachings."

But wait a minute, this seems to be a contradiction. The Baal Shem Tov taught that a Jew must serve *HaShem* with his heart. But we know that the Alter Rebbe called his own teachings, *Chabad* which stands for *Chochmah, Binah* and *Daas* wisdom, understanding and knowledge. These are all things we do with our mind, not our heart. So how could the Alter Rebbe say that he is continuing the Baal Shem Tov's teachings? The Baal Shem Tov stressed the heart, and the Alter Rebbe stressed the mind.

Actually, there is no contradiction. The Baal Shem Tov was talking about a Jew's love for *HaShem* that comes from deep inside. This is what the connection between a Jew and *HaShem* is all about.

But in the hustle bustle of our everyday lives, we don't always feel this love. The Alter Rebbe teaches us that we shouldn't only wait for special times to make us feel this love for *HaShem*. We can bring out this out every day.

How? By studying the *Chabad Chassidus* the Alter Rebbe taught. These teachings allow us to understand many deep things about *HaShem* and about our *neshamos*. When we study this, our minds will understand and this will make our hearts feel.



(Adapted from  
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# Close Encounters Rabbi Yosef Richtman ·

## "He encountered the place" (28:11)

Now think about this. A Jew gets up in the morning, puts on tallit and tefillin, opens up his siddur, and starts to pray and his voice is heard on the other side of the Universe. Who installed the spiritual narrow-cast that accomplishes such an incredible feat? Who was able to construct a system that elevates every prayer in every generation through all the worlds above this one until they find their home under Hashem's throne of Glory?

Who engineered such an incredible communications system that even the Internet pales in comparison?

Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. The Avot Patriarchs. The spiritual fathers of the Jewish People established those incredible spiritual conduits to Heaven. However, each of the Avot established something unique in his prayer.

The Talmud (*Berachot* 26b) tells us that Avraham established *Shacharit*, the morning prayer. The morning is the time of *Chesed*, kindness. As it says in *Tehillim*, "to relate in the morning Your Kindness." The *midah* (defining characteristic) of Avraham is *chesed*, as it says "*Chesed l'Avraham*."

Yitzchak established *mincha*, the afternoon prayer. The afternoon is when the world starts to descend into the

darkness of night. It is a time of *Din*, of Judgment. The *midah* of Yitzchak is *Din*.

That Yaakov established the evening prayer, *Maariv*, we learn from this week's Torah portion: "*He encountered the place*" The spiritual masters teach us that the Hebrew word which is translated here as "encountered" implies the supreme encounter with the Divine prayer. Yaakov prayed at night. Another understanding of the word "encounter" means that Yaakov wanted to move from that place but he "encountered" the Wall of the World. The whole world became like a giant stone wall in front of him.

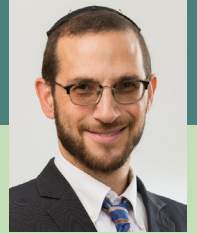
During the history of the Jewish People's long night of exile, it sometimes seems like the whole world is like a stone wall in front of us, a stone wall that will not let us pass. For these times, Yaakov established a prayer for his children, and their children, and their children, until the long night of exile finally ends.

That prayer is the prayer of the night.

The prayer that lifts us above the tragedies of pogrom and holocaust, the prayer of exile. The prayer of hope.

*Maariv*.

## Spiritual Schizophrenia Rabbi Sholom Rosner



When Yaakov encounters Rachel for the first time, he greets her and then he cries (*Beresheet* 29:11). Rashi offers two explanations for his sadness, the second reason being that Yaakov came empty-handed. When Eliezer greeted Rivka he showered her with valuable gifts. Yaakov had nothing. Chazal tell us that Elifaz, Esav's son chased after Yaakov as per his father's instructions to kill him. Yet, when Elifaz confronts Yaakov, he is confused. On the one hand he had learned with his grandfather Yitzhak that one cannot kill another, yet he also was obligated to fulfill his father's request in accordance with the *mitzva* of *Kibbud av*. To resolve this conflict, Yaakov suggests that Elifaz take all his belongings, because a poor individual is compared to a dead person (*anei chashuv k'mes*).

Elifaz had a distorted sense of morality. He was somewhat schizophrenic. His understanding of right and wrong, light and darkness, was convoluted. Rav Chaim Shmulovitz in his *sefer Sichos Mussar* suggests that each and every one of us struggles with this conflict. At times we may be swayed to act a certain improper way under the guise of a *mitzva*.

Let's offer an example, cited by the Chafetz Chaim. In *Zecharya* (*haftorah* for *Be'haaloscha*) the Satan is referenced as being on the right side (*v'hasatan omed al yemino l'sotno*). The Chafetz Chaim asks, isn't the Satan usually referred to as being on the left side? The right side is typically affiliated with the correct path. The Chafetz Chaim explains, that at times, the Satan appears under the

guise of a *mitzva* in order to accomplish its deceptive mission. The Chafetz Chaim used to shut the lights (put out the candles) in the Beis Medrash at a certain hour, lest talmidim stay up late learning and sleep through *minyana*.

It is not surprising that Amalek is the descendent of Elifaz. Amalek *b'gematria* is equal to *safek* (confusion) 240. Amalek seeks to instill confusion into the world.

Eliyahu Hanavi rebukes the masses for wavering between worshipping God and idolatry. (1 *Melachim* 18:21). Worshipping God and idolatry simultaneously, essentially mixing darkness and light, is worse than selecting either.

Another application of how one can distort morality appears in the story with the two mothers who approach Shlomo Hamelech to determine whose child lies before them. It is unfathomable that a person would go out of their way to kidnap a child so that they could raise them as their own and a day later be willing to have the child killed if they can't keep it.

We should take care to ensure that we do not justify unbecoming behavior for what we unduly label a greater cause. This includes violating a *mitzva ben adam l'chavero* on account of fulfilling a *mitzva ben adam l'makom*. May we be able to overcome Elifaz's confusion within us and act *b'derech hayashar* in fulfilling all *mitzvos*.



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# JOKES

## Newlywed Couple!

This newlywed couple checked into a suite at the Watergate Hotel in Washington for their honeymoon... The bride was worried that the place might still be bugged, so she asked her husband to search the room thoroughly...

He looked behind the curtains, under the bed, in the closets, and finally under the rug... And there, beneath the rug, he found a mysterious disc with four screws... Using his Swiss army knife, he undid the screws and threw the disc out the window!...

The following morning, as they were checking out, the hotel manager asked: "So how was your stay?... How was the service?... Was everything ok - any issues?" The groom was suspicious. "Why are you asking me so many questions?"

"Well," said the manager, "the suite under you complained that the chandelier fell on them!"

## Insomnia

Dr. Goldstein moved into the neighborhood and began attending the local shul. Rabbi Feldman was delighted, and it wasn't long before they were helping each other in their work, Rabbi Feldman referring people to the doctor, and Dr. Goldstein telling patients about the shul. One referral from Dr.

Goldstein called the shul office asking for a written copy of the Rabbi's last four Shabbat sermons. Rabbi Feldman was most pleased until he discovered that the patient's problem was insomnia.

## Discovering your Name

A young Jewish mother walks her son to the school bus on his first day of kindergarten.

"Please behave, my bubaleh," she says.

"Take good care of yourself and think about your mother who is waiting for you,

tataleh!"

"And come right back home on the bus, my shepseleh."

"Remember, your Mommy loves you a lot, my ketzeleh!"

At the end of the school day, the bus returns. She runs to her son and hugs him.

"So what did the love of my life learn on his first day of school?" she asks.

"I learned that my name is David," is the boy's response..

## The Grandmother

Last year, just before Hanukkah, Miriam, a grandmother was giving directions to her grown up grandson who was coming to visit with his wife. "You come to the front door of the condominium complex. I am in apartment 2B."

Miriam continued, "There is a big panel at the door. With your elbow push button 2B. I will buzz you in. Come inside, the elevator is on the right. Get in, and with your elbow hit 2. When you get out I am on the left. With your elbow, hit my doorbell."

"Grandma, that sounds easy," replied Jonathan, the grandson, "but why am I hitting all these buttons with my elbow."

To which she answered, "You're coming to visit empty handed?"

## Fishing in the Dead Sea

A tourist drives along the shore of the Dead Sea and spots a fisherman casting his fishing rod into the water.

The tourist, surprised, stops and explains to the fisherman that no fish can live in the Dead Sea. The fisherman said "Yes, some do. For \$10, you may sit next to me and I will show you."

The curious tourist paid the \$10 and waited patiently. After an hour, the tourist said: "hey, where are the fish? And, by the way, how many fish did you catch today?"

The fisherman answered "You are number six."



"One advantage of talking to yourself is that you know at least somebody's listening."

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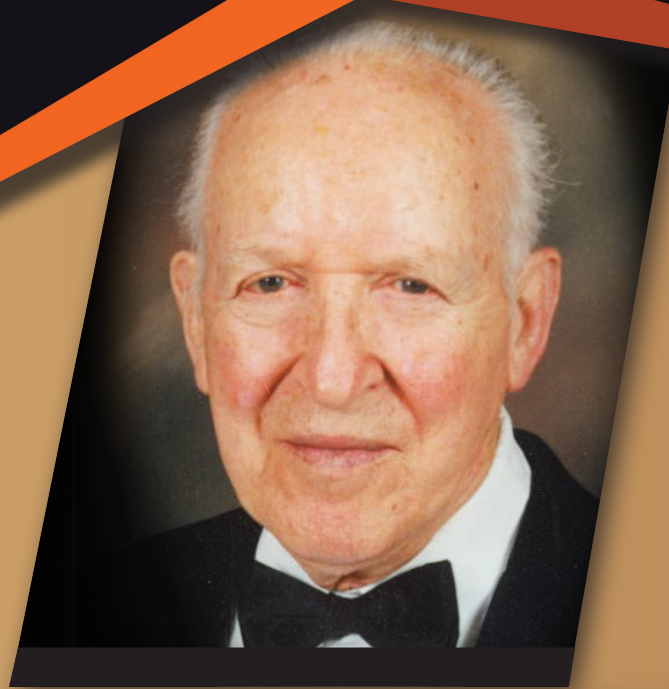
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תומכי שבת ד'ראקלנד קאנטי

*In memory of Chaim Munzer z"l* • לז"נר' חיים בן ר' שמואל צבי



This  
Shabbos  
is sponsored  
in memory of

Mr. Lester Shapiro

אליעזר בן נחמן ז"ל

A giving man of great integrity

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THE  
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TAKING YOUTH TO THE NEXT LEVEL